

1 SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 36

2 48TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2008

3 INTRODUCED BY

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10 A JOINT MEMORIAL

11 REQUESTING THAT THE SITE OF THE BATTLE OF PUERTECITO DE  
12 POJOAQUE THAT OCCURRED ON JANUARY 27, 1838 BE COMMEMORATED BY  
13 AN OFFICIAL HISTORIC MARKER AS AN EVENT AND LOCATION OF  
14 HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE.

15  
16 WHEREAS, the Rebellion of Rio Arriba has been the subject  
17 of pundits and historians since its occurrence in 1837, and its  
18 causes have been analyzed by citizens and authors in several  
19 publications, the most concise being *Rebellion in Rio Arriba,*  
20 *1837* by Janet Lecompt; and

21 WHEREAS, several governors of the department of New  
22 Mexico, including Manuel Armijo, Santiago Abreu, Francisco  
23 Sarracino, Albino Perez and Donaciano Vigil, were involved in  
24 the rebellion, either as protagonists or antagonists; and

25 WHEREAS, Donaciano Vigil, who served as the civil governor

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1 of New Mexico during 1847 and 1848, addressed the departmental  
2 assembly of New Mexico, before New Mexico had become either a  
3 territory or a state of the United States, and provided  
4 narratives recorded in *A Statement Concerning Historical Events*  
5 *Between 1801-1851* to the historian and collector William G.  
6 Ritch, in which the governor presented the Rebellion of Rio  
7 Arriba as one of the major events of New Mexico history; and

8 WHEREAS, family folklore in the rio arriba, or the "upper  
9 river" country from Chimayo to El Rancho, kept story fragments  
10 of the Rebellion of Rio Arriba in their oral tradition and  
11 songs; and

12 WHEREAS, history has failed to memorialize leaders of the  
13 Rebellion of Rio Arriba, including Governor Jose Gonzales,  
14 Rafael Garcia, Desiderio Montoya, Antonio Abad Montoya, Alcalde  
15 Juan Jose Esquibel, Antonio "El Coyote" Vigil and Baltazar of  
16 Ohkay Owingeh, because they lost the battle of Puertecito de  
17 Pojoaque in the face of better-armed and better-organized  
18 Mexican forces and local militias; and

19 WHEREAS, many citizens in what was then the Mexican  
20 department of New Mexico sought to oppose the constitutional  
21 reforms of 1835, reforms in which Mexico sought to impose  
22 taxes, centralize authority in Mexico City and restrict some  
23 liberties that had been guaranteed by the 1824 Mexican  
24 constitution; and

25 WHEREAS, neglect by the Mexican national government due to

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1 internal political turmoil promoted economic and military  
2 insecurity in New Mexico; and

3 WHEREAS, Juan Jose Esquibel, the alcalde of Santa Cruz de  
4 la Canada, and factions from throughout New Mexico arose in  
5 open defiance of the Mexican government, its authorities and  
6 its constitution during the summer of 1837 and formed a  
7 revolutionary council called the "Canton"; and

8 WHEREAS, fiscal irresponsibility, embezzlement and  
9 political intrigue had reached a level that destroyed the  
10 credibility of the Santa Fe government under the administration  
11 of Governor Albino Perez and led to the assassination on August  
12 9, 1837 of Perez and several other high-ranking officials; and

13 WHEREAS, during September of 1837, men who were community  
14 leaders from the rio abajo, or the "lower river" country of  
15 Albuquerque, Belen and Tome, issued the "Pronouncement of  
16 Tome", which sought to bring order to the chaos that ensued  
17 because of the Rebellion of Rio Arriba and to counter the aims  
18 of the Canton and which installed Manuel Armijo as political  
19 chief; and

20 WHEREAS, Lieutenant Colonel Justiniani of El Paso del  
21 Norte arrived with a section of two hundred ninety-six men of  
22 the Mexican army and an official appointment that made Armijo  
23 the new governor of New Mexico; and

24 WHEREAS, on January 27, 1838, the forces under Governor  
25 Armijo and Lieutenant Colonel Justiniani, numbering five

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1 hundred eighty-two men, marched upon more than one thousand  
2 three hundred revolutionaries at the Puertecito de Pojoaque,  
3 located about eighteen miles north of Santa Fe, and in the  
4 action, commander of the revolutionaries Antonio "El Coyote"  
5 Vigil was killed, dozens died, many were taken prisoner, others  
6 were seriously wounded and the dead were said to have filled  
7 five wagons; and

8 WHEREAS, the famous Padre Jose Martinez of Taos served as  
9 chaplain under Governor Manuel Armijo during the battle of  
10 Puertecito de Pojoaque, and he performed last rites for the  
11 dying; and

12 WHEREAS, Manuel Armijo entered the villa of Santa Cruz de  
13 la Canada and found no opposition, bringing an end to the  
14 Rebellion of Rio Arriba; and

15 WHEREAS, Manuel Armijo summarily executed the remaining  
16 leaders of the rebellion, Jose Gonzales, the Montoyas and  
17 Alcalde Juan Jose Esquibel; and

18 WHEREAS, the location of the battlefield is associated  
19 with the place of Puertecito de Pojoaque, the location of which  
20 is used as a reference point in Section 4-21-1 NMSA 1978 dating  
21 to 1851, where the section identifies that "The boundaries of  
22 the county of Rio Arriba are as follows: on the south from the  
23 Puertecito of Pojoaque, drawing a direct line toward the west  
24 in the direction of the mesilla of San Yldefonso; from the  
25 mesilla crossing the Rio del Norte toward the west and

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1 continuing until it reaches the boundaries of the territory;  
2 drawing a direct line from said Puertecito de Pojoaque toward  
3 the east until it reaches the last house of the town of  
4 Cundiyo, toward the south, continuing the same line until it  
5 reaches the highest point of the mountain of Nambe; from  
6 thence, following the summit of the mountain toward the north,  
7 until it reaches the southern boundary of the county of Taos;  
8 this shall constitute the eastern boundary, and on the north  
9 the boundary of the county of Taos, and on the west the  
10 boundary line of the territory."; and

11 WHEREAS, the location of the Puertecito de Pojoaque as a  
12 landmark and continued knowledge of the Rebellion of Rio Arriba  
13 are important to the identity of Rio Arribenos and Rio Arriba  
14 history; and

15 WHEREAS, the Rebellion of Rio Arriba and the site of the  
16 battle of Puertecito de Pojoaque, and the importance of these  
17 events to New Mexico's history, have nearly become lost and  
18 forgotten, and a project to improve United States highway  
19 84-285 between Pojoaque and the Espanola valley has failed to  
20 preserve this site or deem it worthy of commemoration;

21 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE  
22 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that from this day forward the site of the  
23 battle of Puertecito de Pojoaque will be preserved for  
24 posterity and will be marked by an official historic marker;  
25 and

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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the following text be sent to  
2 the historic preservation division of the cultural affairs  
3 department for the consideration of the cultural properties  
4 review committee, the statutory commission charged with  
5 approving official historic marker text:

6 "Battle of Puertecito de Pojoaque 27 January 1838  
7 Puertecito means "little pass". The area extending one mile to  
8 the south and to the north of this site was the scene of a  
9 battle when the citizens of the Rio Arriba country, in New  
10 Mexico, then a department of Mexico, rebelled against the  
11 Mexican government over taxes and liberty. Governor Manuel  
12 Armijo and the Mexican army defeated factions of Tewa and  
13 Hispano revolutionaries led by Antonio "El Coyote" Vigil and  
14 interim Governor Jose Gonzales."; and

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
16 transmitted to the historic preservation division of the  
17 cultural affairs department, the state historian and the  
18 governor.

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